Off the Grid: 30 hours to give it a shot
A program for exploration, innovation and experimentation
https://www.library.qut.edu.au/about/management/initiatives.jsp

IDEAS
Libraries are full of clever people with great ideas, but often you don’t have the time to explore them.

EXPERIMENTATION
Off the Grid, inspired by similar concepts at Google and 3M, gave QUT staff in 2015 30 hours offline between May and October to do just that: explore and experiment.

INNOVATION
Off the Grid offers participants professional respect and autonomy, and rewards innovation and contribution to the improvement of the library.

THE PREMISE IS SIMPLE
30 hours across six months for individuals or teams to experiment with a project or idea that could have an impact on QUT in 2020. Generally no limits were placed on the scope of the idea, but it had to be achievable within 30 hours of work.

EASY TO JOIN
Open to EVERYONE, at any level of the organisation. Joining only required was a paragraph outlining their idea to their supervisor. The 30 hours were negotiated with their supervisor, and the project added to their Performance Plans for legitimacy.

A NO PRESSURE PROGRAM
NO reporting and only ONE outcome at the end of the period: a poster to present their ideas and experience to their colleagues. Managers/supervisors were crucial to the success of the program, to provide support and resources, and to get these 2 critical ideas across to their staff:
- Failure is OK
- You are allowed to spend time exploring new ideas

IDEA HAMSTERS
21 staff, or Idea Hamsters, took up the offer, individually and in groups, with projects as varied as improving a widely used thesis template to using augmented reality in teaching. Enthusiasm and curiosity led to boosting the skills, knowledge and networks of staff across library and the wider university.

FINDINGS: GREAT RESULTS
8 projects were presented and displayed in posters for all library staff to see, and several innovations have flourished into implementation or further development within the Library's workflows and services, all thanks to having a little time to go "Off the Grid".